

struggling across the globe to claim the fundamental rights and freedoms that belong to all human beings.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the House to take up my resolution and set aside today to recognize Human Rights Day.

#### CONGRESS NEEDS TO PROTECT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as I have said today on the floor and yesterday, the American people expect us to keep them safe.

Let me thank my colleagues for the support they have given the Homeland Security Committee on a number of bills and particularly note the legislation that I introduced, the FRIENDS Act, the sole purpose of which is to ensure that those who are first responders who have to be away for a period of time, that their families are protected.

I also think it is an important moment for bridging and building on law enforcement and community. I have had the opportunity to meet with a number of police chiefs of major cities. We have introduced—JOHN CONYERS and myself, along with a number of Members—the Law Enforcement Trust and Integrity Act, which really is an opportunity and a bridge to be able to provide an accreditation pathway for the law enforcement agencies to build upon the improvement and the best practices that they may have, including a medallion for those who have fallen in duty.

It is also important, as we look forward to the security of this Nation, to recognize the tragedy of San Bernardino. I offer to those families my deepest sympathy. There was a major failure which we need to correct.

Members of Congress need to come together so that we are not behind the terrorist act, but in front of it, to protect the American people.

#### CURRENT ISSUES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. FORTENBERRY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

##### PUERTO RICO'S FINANCIAL CRISIS AND THE WAY FORWARD

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the time.

I would like to begin this evening by yielding to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. DUFFY), my good friend and colleague.

Mr. DUFFY. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman yielding.

Tonight I rise to talk about our brothers and sisters in Puerto Rico.

If you have watched the news recently, you are well aware that there is an economic financial debt crisis tak-

ing place right now in Puerto Rico. Our American brothers and sisters are going through an incredibly difficult time.

The island is \$73 billion in debt. That is 100 percent of their GDP, which is catastrophically high. This debt has had a huge impact on the livelihoods of those who live on the island.

The unemployment rate is over twice what it is on the mainland. It is at 12.4 percent. Forty-eight percent of Americans on the island are living in poverty. Again, half of the island citizens—Americans—are living in poverty.

Ten percent of the 3.5 million people on the island are leaving and they are coming to the mainland. It is great because they work hard and they have an amazing culture. It is wonderful they are coming. But if you are coming to the mainland, you should be coming because you want to come, not because you don't have economic opportunity in your home. We don't want to force people away from their families and their neighbors and their community because they don't have economic opportunity.

We have to stand together in this House and stand with our brothers and sisters in Puerto Rico. We can't turn a blind eye. We have to work with them. We have to work for them so we can address this crisis.

Yesterday I introduced a pretty simple and straightforward bill that will help jump-start the Puerto Rican economy, help put people back to work, grow their economy, better paying jobs, and lift people out of poverty. It is very simple. It is called the Puerto Rico Financial Stability and Debt Restructuring Choice Act, and it has two prongs.

Prong number one is we are going to implement a financial stability board that is going to help the island with the management of its budget, its tax collection, and its finances.

Prong number two is Puerto Rico can access a chapter 9 bankruptcy. By the way, every State in America can access chapter 9. It will be the same rights as every State that we will offer Puerto Rico. It is pretty simple and straightforward stuff.

I also think it is important to note that no one wants to have a financial stability board shoved down their throat, and the citizens of Puerto Rico don't want that either. That is why we give them the choice. This doesn't go into effect unless the Puerto Rican legislative assembly approves the financial stability board and the Governor signs it so that they have a say in their future.

If we do this, we will allow Puerto Rico to restructure their debt, to get their finances in order, to grow their economy, and to let people on the island start living the American Dream. If we do nothing, if we turn a blind eye and say that we are not going to offer the same bankruptcy option that every State has, we are turning our backs on

our fellow American citizens on the island, and that is not who we are. We should stand together.

Now, there are others who have proposed different solutions for the island, and those solutions involve a bailout without real structural reform. I have got to tell you that, after the 2008 financial crisis, I think Americans have had it up to here with bailouts. We usually go with bankruptcy and financial reform, and that is what my bill does.

I would encourage all of my fellow Americans in this institution, whether you are a conservative or a liberal, you are a Republican or a Democrat, to note that our brothers and sisters, our fellow American citizens in Puerto Rico, are going through tough times, and it is our job to stand with them, not turn our backs.

If we can pass this bill, it is going to be a new day on the island, economic prosperity and opportunity. And then people have a choice to say: Do I want to stay on the island, raise my family on the island, or do I want to leave and come to the mainland?

The choice is theirs. They won't be forced into that choice just because they don't have opportunity on the island of Puerto Rico.

I encourage all of my colleagues and friends to reach out. Let's be part of the solution.

##### RECOVERING AMERICA

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Mr. Speaker, as I walked through the airport recently, I noticed a young teenager. She was traveling and was seemingly happy to be involved in whatever activity she was going to.

She wore a button on her lapel. It said: What you do matters. It caught my attention: What you do matters. I liked it. I am not sure what was motivating her, but she wanted to communicate an important value to elevate an ideal. I simply admired her willingness to take a stand.

Mr. Speaker, I should say this now, though: There is a troubling statistic out there, and a recent survey highlights this. A majority of Americans do not identify with what America has become. Many people feel our country is slipping away. In reality, most want to reclaim the promise of our great Nation.

Contrary to the barrage of negativity, most people hope for justifiable goals: to regain power over their own lives, to regain power over the government, and to regain power over their own economic prospects.

Mr. Speaker, one of the strengths of America's system of government is its capacity for constant replenishment. Opportunities sometimes present themselves unpredictably. That gives us a chance to reassess and realign in new and compelling ways, both to preserve important traditions as well as to restore the future promise of our Nation.

A stronger America might be glimpsed through what I call four interlocking principles, the first of